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FM AMCONSUL KARACHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0974
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0434
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0242
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0285
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1830
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2683
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 4566
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KARACHI 000097

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/24/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: BALOCHISTAN - SUICIDE BOMBER HITS GIRLS' MADRASSA

REF: A. KARACHI 26

[1](#)B. KARACHI 42

[1](#)C. KARACHI 18

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY ACTING CONSUL GENERAL CATHERINE RODRIGUEZ
FOR REASONS 1.4 b and d.

Summary:

[1](#)1. (SBU) A suicide bomber narrowly missed leading Jamiat-e-Ulema-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) leaders, including the party's provincial head Mohammad Khan Shirani, during a March 2 attack on a girls' madrassa in the town of Pashin, Balochistan that killed five people. Shirani was the presumed target of the bomber. No one has yet claimed responsibility, but speculation has centered on the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LEJ), which has claimed responsibility for a number of recent attacks in Quetta. The Taliban, close to some factions of the JUI-F but not to Shirani, could also have orchestrated the attack as retaliation for his condemnation of the group.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Five students were killed and another five injured in a suicide attack at a girls' madrassa in Pashin, Balochistan on March 2. The intended targets may have been Mohammad Khan Shirani, the provincial head of Jamiat-e-Ulema-Islam Fazl (JUI-F), a religious political party, and other JUI-F leaders such as provincial Public Health Minister Abdul Bari Agha and Balochistan Assembly Deputy Speaker Syed Matiullah Agha. All three had left the madrassa several minutes before the attack occurred. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

Blame Placed on Religious Extremists

[1](#)3. (C) Agha accused pro-Taliban forces of orchestrating the attack, pointing specifically to the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LEJ), which has claimed credit for recent sectarian killings in Balochistan (ref A, B). He said extremist groups such as LEJ were not supportive of the democratic process in Pakistan. (Note: LEJ, designated a terrorist organization by both the USG and the GOP, has been linked to a number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan, including the 1997 killing of four American oil workers in Karachi, the 2002 murder of Daniel Pearl, the 2002 killing of 11 French workers, and the 2002 International Church bombing in Islamabad. End comment.)

¶4. (C) Siddique Baloch, a journalist and political analyst also blamed LEJ and told Post that he believed the target of the attack was Shirani, who survived an attempt on his life in 2006. JUI-F leader Maulvi Noor Mohammed, a firebrand Mullah in Quetta, has been very vocal in his support of the Taliban. The mainstream JUI-F under Shirani has distanced itself from the Taliban and has been critical of Noor Mohammed,s sermons in the Taliban,s favor.

Comment

¶5. (C) In the convoluted world of Baloch politics, it is often hard to determine culpability for violent acts. In its previous attacks, LEJ has been quick to claim responsibility. It has not done so in this case. Shirani has past links to the Taliban dating back to the 1980s. He has pointedly distanced himself from the Taliban in recent years, and his faction of the JUI-F publicly denounces the Taliban. Disgruntled Taliban, who have a presence in the province (ref C), could also have organized the attack.
RODRIGUEZ